Can a Rational Consumer Be a Good Citizen? Conflicting Goals in Today's Society

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Understanding Citizenship Consumption: Conflicting Goals in Today's Society
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According to public opinion polls, when “all other things are equal” consumers prefer “green” products (Ginsberg and Bloom 2004). However, other things are almost never equal. Price, characteristics and functionality are often poorer for environmentally friendly products, and people compromise. Our preliminary research suggests the existence of a goal hierarchy formed by consumers. The highest level of conflict is perceived between self related goals and environmental goals, while least perceived conflict is between self related goals and family and friends related goals. To explain the phenomenon we draw from the literature on social dilemmas, as well as motivation theory.

[to cite]:

[url]:
http://www.acrwebsite.org/volumes/12382/volumes/v33/NA-33

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Field Experiments in Nonprofit Marketing: Social Identity and Status Influence
Contributions
Yue Shang, University of Pennsylvania
Tara Thomas, University of Michigan
Shirli Kopelman, University of Michigan

This project examines whether the level of contribution to a public good is influenced by the relational affiliation, relative status of donors, and motivational framing of the transaction as consumption versus a charitable exchange. We use a field experiment in alumni giving to study such effects. Pilot field research has shown that social factors do influence contributions, and that donors do categorize their motivational framing of the transaction differently. In this abstract, we will focus on the hypothesis and the design of the actual research.

I Gave at the Office (And I Hated It): Changes in Preference for Ethical Behavior Following an Unrelated Ethical Act
Jennifer Young, University of Texas, Austin
Julie Irwin, University of Texas, Austin

Two studies examine propensity to give to a charity following another, unrelated charitable act. We find that giving is affected both by 1) assimilation of affect from the first charitable act to the second and 2) a newly-identified phenomenon we call “gave at the office”: respondents sometimes feel that they have done their fair share of charitable giving and lose a sense of obligation to donate to subsequent activities. Manipulations of difficulty and morality of the first charitable activity determine whether people are likely to experience assimilation or “gave at the office” effects and thus influence people’s likelihood to donate to a second unrelated ethical cause.

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Free Bumper Stickers for a Better Future: The Long Term Effect of the Labeling Technique
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Abstract
We compared the labeling technique with a traditional social marketing campaign, providing thought-provoking arguments, regarding their long term effect on ecological behavior. In this study (n=241), we provided participants either with an ecological, self-descriptive label, an information-based campaign promoting ecological behavior or no information at all, and compared behavior in a repeated social dilemma situation, framed as an ecological task. We found that labeling outperforms classical campaigns on the longer term. We did not observe the expected interaction with mental load.

Paper Summary
Campaigns promoting different kinds of sustainable consumer behavior (e.g. buying ethical or ecological products) have often shown limited success, especially in the long term. Classical social marketing efforts, communicating arguments in favor of the sustainable alternatives, may cause consumers to think about the pros but also the cons of these purchases. Ethical and ecological products often are more expensive, require more effort to find, and their quality is trusted less. Even if these campaigns achieve short term success, people